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ME 18-69

REQUEST FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (RCE)

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DATA:

Program: IWMI PIO Grant: MENAdrought
Project Countries: Middle East Regional (MER)
Time Period: August 15, 2018, through September 30, 2021
LOP Amount \$4,498,038
Prepared by: John Wilson, ME/TS
Date: August 8, 2018
RCE Amendment (Y/N): N

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED: (Place X where applicable)

Categorical Exclusion: X Negative Determination:
Positive Determination: Deferral:

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS: (Place X where applicable)

CONDITIONS PVO/NGO:

Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(a), environmental analysis/evaluation is required for new projects, programs or activities authorized by USAID. This RCE evaluates activities planned under the PIO Grant to the International Water Management Institute for "MENAdrought."

BACKGROUND

USAID's Environmental Compliance Procedures (22 CFR 216) apply to all USAID programs, projects, and activities. As required by these procedures, the potential for environmental, human, and social impacts must be carefully evaluated during project planning, and practical environmental protection and mitigation strategies must be identified. Successful inclusion of environmentally sound design and management criteria in program implementation plans and budgets benefits communities by avoiding environmental failures that would otherwise be damaging to community lives and livelihoods. Impact assessment best practices also recognize

that monitoring and evaluation of mitigation measures permits adaptive management to correct for initial flaws in design and to increase development impact and effectiveness.

PLANNED INTERVENTIONS:

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI), in partnership with the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) and Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute (DWFI) at the University of Nebraska, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Goddard Space Flight Center (NASA-GSFC) and Johns Hopkins University (JHU), will work with other international and regional partner organizations such as FAO RNE, Global Water Partnership-Mediterranean (GWP-MED), and national partners to:

- a) deliver enhanced drought monitoring/early warning and seasonal forecasting
- b) drought impact and vulnerability mapping and economic assessment of costs
- c) drought preparedness planning and resilience building

The proposed activity is centered on facilitating technology and policy planning solutions for the target countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon and Jordan. Beyond the direct benefits of better drought management, it aims to reduce the impacts droughts have on vulnerable and marginalized communities whose ability to absorb the effects are limited, leading to suffering and the loss of livelihoods.

As in the previous work, the main stakeholders are the Ministries of Agriculture, Water, Environment and Economy; the meteorological/hydrological agencies; the national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES); farmers unions and water use associations; local development agencies/authorities; NGOs focused on water management, rural livelihoods, and gender and conservation organizations. Both the international and regional partners have worked with IWMI on various projects so there is a mutual respect and understanding of capabilities and the focus of the different stakeholders. There will be various modes of engagement, including contractual, but also through more informal commitment where this is not possible, such as with government agencies. Their input to meetings, workshops and activities will be made possible by supporting travel and accommodation expenses.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

This technical assistance and training activity will improve drought monitoring, drought impact assessment, and drought preparedness and resilience building in the target MENA countries of Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Jordan (only with Mission concurrence). In this way, the activity will also provide assistance with climate risk management to the implementing partners (ministries of water, agriculture, environment; national agriculture research and extension agencies, meteorological/hydrological agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The IWMI MENA drought project is recommended for a Categorical Exclusion pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i). 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i) states that "education, technical assistance, or

training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc.)” are not subject to the procedures set forth in 22 CFR 216.3.

DISCUSSION:

All activities covered under this procurement are eligible and recommended for a Categorical Exclusion pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i). Accordingly, the ME Bureau Environment Officer concluded that no further environmental analysis is required.

CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT:

As per ADS 201 “Climate Risk Management for USAID Projects and Activities” USAID shall factor climate resilience into international development programs and investments. This activity directly contributes to this goal and provides technical assistance and training in drought monitoring and climate modeling, as well as support for drought preparedness and resilience building in MENA countries. The climate risk rating for this activity is LOW. The climate risk screening table is available [here](#)¹.

REVISIONS:

Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.3(a)(9), if new information becomes available that indicates that activities to be funded might be “major” and the effect “significant,” this categorical exclusion will be reviewed and revised by the originator of the project and submitted to the Bureau Environmental Officer for approval, and, if appropriate, an environmental assessment will be prepared.

¹ <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UeumMeRP5X7I-HBCJiKjwgiWpbd3LybmEdOyyXByscw/edit?usp=sharing>

APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDED ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION - IWMI PIO Grant:
MENAdrought:

CLEARANCES:

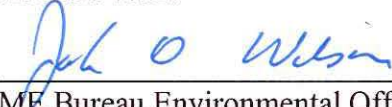
Acting Office Director, ME/TS _____ cleared by email _____ Date 08/12/2018
April Hahn

ME/SPO _____ cleared _____ Date 08/13/2018
Dawn Heuschel

GC/ME _____ Cleared _____ Date _____
Jane Ellen Paschall

ME REA _____ cleared by email _____ Date 08/13/2018
Suzanne Ebert

APPROVAL:



ME Bureau Environmental Officer
John Wilson

Date 8/13/2018